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MEMORANDUM: FOR THE RECORD

4 June 1963

SUBJECT: CRASH OF A-12 - 123/926

The following is chronological record with exhibits of the events surrounding the non-fatal crash of A-12-123/926.

FACTS:

At approximately 1213 Local 24 May 1963 notification was received from the Command Post that A-12, 123/926 had a possible emergency. This emergency was declared by [ ] who was flying chase in an F-101. Upon [ ] return to [ ] he was questioned by the Commander and the DCO. He stated that he had been chase with the A-12 but had lost him on a turn in weather over Wendover, Utah. [ ] received a garbled transmission which he believed to read that the A-12 was having air-speed trouble.

The Commander set up his Headquarters in the Command Post and established a telcon with Project Headquarters.

All available air-craft including the Connie #1102, C-47 #811Z, F-101's, U3-B and the Cessna #180 were launched in a search effort but with negative results. The H-47-B helicopter was placed on alert. At about 1305 Local a call was received, through Yuletide Control, from a Mr. Anderson, dispatcher, Utah Highway patrol at Salt Lake City that an air-craft had crashed 14 miles South of Wendover, Utah near Highway 50. Also that the pilot had ejected safely and was uninjured. The Commander requested that all necessary assistance be rendered and any available 4 wheel drive vehicles to stand by for further instructions.

Emergency crash procedures were implemented immediately and all search air craft recalled. All contractors were notified not to call their home offices or discuss the incident. Press coverage was requested from Nellis AFB,

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OSI and [ ] [ ] cautioned all incoming passengers and crew members at LAC about discussing the incident. At 1520 L 24 May a LAC Jet Star departed [ ] enroute to Wendover Auxiliary AFB carrying the Commander, DCM, Flight Surgeon, Security Officer, [ ]

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Landing was made at Wendover Auxiliary AFB at 1620L. [ ] was

found to be in semi-isolation guarded by Deputy Sheriff's Mr. Ed Boyce, Elko County, Nevada and Mr. G. Lewis Young, Tooele County, Utah. [ ] advised that he bailed out at approximately 1200-1205L. He stated that he had not released his name and had not discussed the incident with anyone. He stated he was in good physical condition except for some minor back pains. [ ] advised that he had his emergency packet and a flight map in the lower right leg pocket of his flight suit and this pocket was opened. After ejecting and while parachuting down he noticed the pocket open and closed it but the packet and flight map were missing. [ ] speculated that he lost the packet on ejection. He had his parachute, seat pack and seat with him the latter having been picked up by one Mr. L. A. Hewitt, of Salt Lake City. Mr. Hewitt was driving North on Highway 51 and saw [ ] parachuting to safety. Mr. Hewitt who was driving a pick up truck turned off the highway and went to [ ] assistance, finding and picking up the seat and drogue chute enroute. Returning to the highway with [ ] Mr. Hewitt was met by Elko County Deputy Sheriff Ed Boyce who took [ ] to Wendover Aux., AFB. It should be noted that Mr. Hewitt never visited or saw the crash site since he picked [ ] up about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the scene of the crash. In response to a request from [ ] Commander, Hill AFB had a helicopter standing by at Wendover and had dispatched an Air Policeman, S/Sgt Lloyd D. Gregory, AF 26792993, to the scene of the crash to stand guard.

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After determining that the scene of the crash was reasonably accessible

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[ ] Commander released the 4 wheel drive vehicles which had been placed on stand by. [ ] was examined by the Flight Surgeon and then questioned briefly by the Commander and Mr. C.L. Johnson. Following this, he was returned to [ ] via the Connie. On 25 May [ ] and the Flight Surgeon departed [ ] for Albuquerque, N.M. [ ] via LAC Jet Star where he was given a physical examination. He was found to be in good physical condition.

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The Commander and Mr. C.L. Johnson proceeded to the scene of the crash which was being guarded by S/Sgt Gregory, Air Police, Hill AFB. At approximately 1610L the main party arrived at Wendover Aux AFB and immediately proceeded to the scene of the crash. A Command Post was established in a private, semi-isolated room at Wendover Aux AFB and manned by [ ] personnel.

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The main wreckage was located approximately 14 miles South of Wendover on Highway #50 and about three (3) miles West of the Highway or a total of about 17 miles from Wendover. (See exhibits 1, 2, 3, and 4) The crash area was rugged desert country with no houses or inhabitants nearby.

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Scattered parts of the wreckage were brought to the main scene and a guard was posted over the wreckage by [ ] Security personnel. The wreckage scene was visited by Col Charles L. Wimberly and Mr. Arthur E. Smith of USAF Directorate of Safety, Norton AFB., California, on the afternoon of 24 May.

During the evening of 24 May the Commander received a phone call from Gen Hubbard, NAFB, who advised him that an employee of a Salt Lake City television station, one Mr. Art Kent, (See attachment 28) had flown over the site during the afternoon and had taken photos. The Commander directed The Security Officer and Deputy Security Officer to proceed to Salt Lake City, contact the individual and advise him that the vehicle was

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rented and contact was made with Mr. Kent at 0200L 25 May. Utilizing OSI credentials, and in a low key approach, the SO and DSO explained that the particular incident was classified and it would be in the best interests of the National Security to with hold any publicity etc. Mr. Kent stated that he was an ex-CID agent, had served six (6) years on the Salt Lake City police force, and was well aware of Security requirements. It developed that he had heard the news of the crash by monitoring the Utah State Highway Patrol circuit. He thought the incident had news potential and had rented a private plane (with pilot) and with his photographer had flown to the site. After taking the photos he called Gen Hubbard to get more information before publishing the story. Gen Hubbard requested Mr. Kent not to release the story and told him [ ] would be contacting him soon. Mr. Kent agreed to surrender the film if the part of the film which showed other scenes were returned to him. This was agreed upon and Mr. Kent was reimbursed \$60.00 for air craft rental and film costs. Mr. Kent declined to give the name of the pilot and photographer stating that in order to get the shots they had to fly five (5) miles inside a restricted area and he didn't want to get any one into trouble. [ ] decided that since the film had been surrendered it was best not to press the matter and returned to Wendover with film arriving about 0500L, 25 May.

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At daylight 25 May canvas tarps were placed over the main wreckage. During the night no one visited, or attempted to visit, the site.

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On the morning of 25 May it was decided by Headquarters that [ ] should return to Salt Lake City and attempt to debrief the pilot and photographer. [ ] returned to Salt Lake City via C-47 and recontacted Mr. Kent. After assurances that no flight violations etc., would be filed, he gave Mr. White the name of the pilot and photographer. Mr. White contacted and debriefed both. (See attachments 5, 6, and 7)

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During the afternoon and night of 24 May the Commander had requested assistance from Hill AFB in the way of trucks, heavy equipment and drivers. These arrived at Wendover on the morning of 25 May. (See attachment 8)

On the same morning an LAC team arrived at Wendover Aux AFB at approximately 0700L, via Connie and work started at once on picking up the wreckage. At approximately 2000 hours local 25 May all wreckage had been picked up and transported to an empty hangar at Wendover Aux AFB where it was under guard during the night by [ ] Security Personnel. At approximately 2100 hours local, the truck drivers and equipment operators from Hill AFB were debriefed by the Commander and DSO and released to return to Hill AFB. (See attachments 9 through 16).

It should be noted that on 24-25 May a search was made in and near the wreckage for the lost emergency packet with negative results.

On 24 May Gen Hubbard made a news release that a F-105 flying out of Nellis AFB had crashed but the pilot had ejected safely. Name of the pilot was withheld.

It should also be noted that all news media in the Salt Lake City, Las Vegas and Los Angeles areas were monitored by [ ] and LAC Security personnel. News items were clipped and retained (See Attachments 17 through 27). The Salt Lake City radio made several short statements during their regularly scheduled news casts. These were very nearly the same as the newspaper items appearing in the Salt Lake City newspaper (ie F-105 etc.)

On 25 May two (2) C-124's (See attachments 29 and 30), arrived at Wendover Aux AFB and stood by to remove the wreckage to [ ] After having removed the wreckage to Wendover Aux AFB the LAC crash team returned to [ ] at 2215L 25 May where they spent the night. They departed again for Wendover at 0700 local

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26 May via Connie. The day of 26 May was devoted to sorting and loading the wreckage. Since much of the wreckage was in small pieces and most of it with sharp jagged edges, boxes had to be made and special handling and loading procedures were required. Plywood was requisitioned from Wendover Aux AFB to make boxes on 25 May.

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On the afternoon of 26 May the Commander and [ ] personnel including [ ] the SO and DSO searched the area for the lost emergency packet. A wide area extending beyond the point where the canopy was found to the main wreckage was thoroughly covered by vehicles and on foot. Three (3) 4-wheel drive trucks were utilized. The trucks were driven across the terrain in a line about 75-100 yards apart with two individuals standing in the rear scanning the area. When this failed to produce the packet, all nine (9) individuals spread out in a line, abreast about 50 feet apart, and walked over the area. However, this also failed to produce the packet. The Cessna #180 was utilized to fly a low level search pattern but this was unproductive. The search was terminated due to approaching darkness and the party returned to Wendover.

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On the night of 26 May final loading was accomplished and the LAC crew departed Wendover, arriving at [ ] at 2355 hours local. [ ] Security personnel maintained a Security watch over the loaded C-124's the night of 26 May.

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On 27 May the final C-124's carrying the last of the wreckage and remaining Security personnel arrived at [ ] at 0845 and 1155 local. The wreckage was unloaded and placed under tarps, with a guard in attendance, awaiting disposition by the accident board.

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25X1A been given a Security briefing by [ ] upon his arrival were debriefed prior to final departure.

25X1A On 27 May Headquarters decided to release [ ] name to the press because increasing pressure and mounting speculation by the press. Release was made by Gen Hubbard through his Public Information Officer (See Attachments 25, 26 and 27).

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25X1A After receiving instructions from Headquarters, [ ] briefed [ ] on the role he should play in the event he was contacted by a press representative. He was instructed to call his wife and his mother to reassure them of his safety and to give them certain instructions in the event of a press inquiry to either.

25X1A [ ] departed for his home via Connie at 1630 Local 27 May.

25X1A In a further effort to find the lost packet, USGS maps of the area were obtained. Wind direction and velocity for 24 May was plotted. Overlays showing probable fall out pattern were made and [ ] and four (4) 25X1A [ ] Security personnel departed [ ] for Wendover at 1000 hours local 25X1A 28 May via C-47. For the remainder of 28 and 29 May the crash area and surrounding terrain was searched on foot and by vehicle in the manner heretofore described. (See attachments 1 thru 4). This search was also unproductive and the party returned to [ ] via C-47 arriving at 2040 local.

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On 29 May [ ] Commander held a staff meeting and after discussion it was decided to deploy another search party to the crash site in an effort to recover the lost emergency packet. Since a foot and vehicle search was unproductive it was decided that this search party should be on horse back, and camp

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and a wrangler through Mr. Darrell B. Wadsworth, Installation Engineer, Wendover Aux AFB.

On the morning of 3 June Mr. C.L. Johnson measured and weighed a duplicate packet and by means of a computer determined the maximum fall out area for such a packet.

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At 1000 hours local [ ] Commander, First Sgt and two para-medics departed [ ] via C-47. On the second (2) day the packet was found, intact, in a new search area one and one-fourth miles in a North Easterly direction from where [ ] landed and three and three-tenths miles from the highway, U.S. Alternate #50. (See attachment #2).

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The packet was opened, inventoried by the Commander, and found not compromised. The wrangler, one Mr. Ray B. Peterson was given a Security caution by the Commander and dismissed.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

The entire operation appears to have been accomplished in as Secure a manner as possible under the existing circumstances. As heretofore mentioned, the crash occurred in a very isolated area which was a decided advantage. The town of Wendover has only about 600 inhabitants and the incident did not appear to create any undue curiosity or speculation. All personnel who visited the crash site and/or viewed the wreckage were given Security briefings by either the Commander or Security Personnel.

Development of the film obtained from Mr. Kent (See attachments 31 thru 51), disclosed that the photography was so poor that a question exists if it would be of news interest. Press interest in the affair, particularly in the Sa

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was released. The last news item appeared in the Las Vegas newspaper on 28 May 1963. As of 4 June 1963, the press had made no inquiries of [ ] and/or members of his family. [ ] received only one telephone inquiry. The A-12 was so broken up on impact as to render it almost unrecognizable. No press members or curiosity seekers visited, or attempted to visit, the crash site. The crash site could not be seen from Highway Alternate U. S. #50 and traffic on this road is light and infrequent. All members of the crash recover team observed sound Security practices and there was no careless talk or speculation. The recovery operation was carried out swiftly and efficiently which aided Security factors immeasurably.

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